Assignment: Wiki 1

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Course: CBSE 7201

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**Action Research:**

An intuitive definition of action research is that it is research with the intent of leading to action, as opposed to standard research which is performed in the pursuit of knowledge and without intent to make any direct changes. I’ve chosen to define action research as done so by Eileen Ferrance of Brown University. “It is a reflective process that allows for inquiry and discussion as components of the “research.” Often, action research is a collaborative activity among colleagues searching for solutions to everyday, real problems experienced in schools, or looking for ways to improve instruction and increase student achievement. Rather than dealing with the theoretical, action research allows practitioners to address those concerns that are closest to them, ones over which they can exhibit some influence and make change.”. The purpose of this research is to define the problem, develop a practical solution and test that solution in a classroom.

Source: Action Research (2000) By Eileen Ferrance, Brown University, p. 1

**Define the Problem:**

New York City has a very large number of students who do not speak English, or do not speak English as their first language. NYC offers several English Language Learner (ELL) programs to assist immigrant students. However, how much those programs can do is limited. In PS X a general 1st grade classroom consists of English only students and ELL Chinese students. The problem is these two groups of students self-separate. They mostly do not interact or communicate with each other. During team activities they prefer being arranged with others from their group. During play time they mostly do not play together. I think language is the largest reason for this separation.

A secondary issue I attend to address in class is the issue of learning a foreign language for American born, English-only students. American students underperform their global peers in learning a second language. My secondary goal will be to introduce the English-only students to another language. The intent will not be to teach the entirety of a foreign language, only an introduction. If any students show a strong interest in the foreign language, that interest will be encouraged.

**Is it Researchable?**

The lack of interaction among linguistically different students is researchable. The inspiration for my intervention is from Dual Language Immersion. There are numerous studies and theoretical viewpoints on the effectiveness of dual language immersion programs. In the U.S. it is a recent program compared to other language learning methods. The first modern language immersion programs appeared in Canada in the 1960s as a French immersion program for teaching English-speaking Canadians. (Baker, C. 1993). People have misconceptions, myths, and doubts in this teaching method. Private schools have long offered immersion programs. Public schools have recently added immersion programs as part of their curriculum, which now includes New York City. The short term and long term results of these programs has been studied, and many of the results are published. Dual language immersion is not another program to help ELL students, not only for gifted/talented students.

It is generally known that Americans are less bilingual than most of the developed world. The highest estimate I can find is that 1 in 4 Americans can hold a conversation in a non-English language. According to survey by the European Commission, only 15-20% of Americans consider themselves bilingual, compared to 56% of Europeans. A vast amount research regarding language education has been gathered over the years. The need to know a foreign language dates back to prehistory. Much research has been done about Chinese-English language learning as well, including work from both the U.S. and China.

Source 1: Baker, C. (1993). Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism.

Source 2: Gao, Xuesong. (2010, Canada). Strategic Language Learning. Multilingual Matters.

**Prior Research: (Name at least two sources)**

There are numerous research papers and scholars on the dual immersion program and language learning teaching methods.

Source 1: Soderman, Anne K. ; Oshio, Toko (2008). The Social and Cultural Contexts of Second Language Acquisition in Young Children

Source 2: Huang, Sharon. Bilingual Buds: The Evolution of a Program

Learning Languages, 2009, Vol.15(1), p.16-17 [Peer Reviewed Journal]

**Pros and Cons: (Name at least two sources)**

Pros: Dual immersion language programs provide students two languages in the classroom. Aside from learning a second language, the primary benefit of immersion is in the student’s mind, in their way of thinking. Bilingual children are better at creative thinking, also called divergent thinking. They tend to find solutions to more original problems, and have metalinguistic awareness, which is an understanding of language and how language functions. It can also increase students’ memory and listening skills.

Cons: Dual immersion program is a lack of explicit foreign instruction in the curriculum. There are not enough qualified bilingual teachers, not enough relevant textbooks and not enough teaching materials to support this program. Some schools at their own cost have translated teaching materials to meet the states criteria. The cost of dual immersion is high, and many argue it is too expensive. Immersion is one teaching method that competes with many others for resources. When immersion is chosen that means some other area of education must loose.

Source 1: Oscar Semb. (2013) Pros and Cons in Immersion - A Study of a Swedish and Italian Exchange Project Focused on Immersion.

Retrieved from http://hh.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:612732/FULLTEXT01.pdf

Source 2: Karine S. Gaffney. (1999) Is Immersion Education Appropriate for All Students?

Retrieved from http://carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol2/Bridge2.2.pdf

**Current Instructional Strategies? (Name at least two sources)**

Current instructional strategies vary. In some instances, immersion means teaching 100% of the curriculum in the foreign language. The two most common models are the 50:50 and 90:10 models, meaning the ratio of the foreign language is 50% or 90% of all teaching.

Source 1: [Gayle Westerberg](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&text=Gayle+Westerberg&search-alias=books&field-author=Gayle+Westerberg&sort=relevancerank), [Leslie Davison](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_2?ie=UTF8&text=Leslie+Davison&search-alias=books&field-author=Leslie+Davison&sort=relevancerank) (2016) An Educator's Guide to Dual Language Instruction: Increasing Achievement and Global Competence, K-12

Source 2: [Terry T Waltz](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&text=Terry+T+Waltz&search-alias=books&field-author=Terry+T+Waltz&sort=relevancerank), [Kristine Wogstad](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_2?ie=UTF8&text=Kristine+Wogstad&search-alias=books&field-author=Kristine+Wogstad&sort=relevancerank) (2015) TPRS with Chinese Characteristics

Source 3: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition

**Practitioners/Theorists? (Name at least two sources)**

The theory of dual language immersion is directly related to the Critical Period Hypothesis. This hypothesis was first proposed by [Wilder Penfield](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilder_Penfield) and Lamar Roberts.

Source 1, Theorist: Wilder Penfield, Lamar Roberts (1959). Speech and Brain Mechanisms.

Source 2: Baker, C. (1993). Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism.

Source 3, Practioner: Simona Montanari, PhD. Professor of Linguistics, CSULA

**My proposed Intervention (Independent Variable): (Name at least one source)**

My proposed intervention is to implement a form of dual language immersion into the classroom. It will be Mandarin Chinese and English dual immersion for 1st graders in a regular classroom. For 45 minutes of class everyday all teaching will be conducted in Mandarin Chinese. At the beginning of the program I will first pair ELL students with English speaking students. They can help and learn language with each other. They will need to interact more with each other. Second, I will provide Mandarin/English cartoons and story books. During afternoon playtime I will read Mandarin story books or perform a Mandarin-sing-along in the classroom. Third, I will also set up some short plays in both languages for students to practice their second language, gain confidence and improve their speaking skills. A play is a group activity that will require the students to be more engaged with each other. Last but not least, I will label everything inside of the classroom in both English and Chinese to establish a culture of learning. At the same time, teach students essential classroom languages in both languages and hang sentences on the wall.

Source: Wayne P. Thomas and Virginia P. Collier. (2003) The Multiple Benefits of Dual Language.

**How will you define (construct) and measure your intervention? (Dependent Variable)**

Surveys at the beginning and end of the program will be used to measure any change to students’ interaction with the linguistically separate groups. Two surveys will be given at the beginning of the program. One survey will be given to the English-only students and the other to the Chinese students. The main difference will be the language of the survey. Both will intend to measure the student’s overall opinions of their peers in the other language group. Another survey will be given at the end, possibly the same survey. The results of the before and after surveys will then be compared to see if there was any change among student opinions.

The secondary goal is to measure any second language acquisition among the English-only students. A short, simple oral test will be given to each individual student. The tests will consist of a simple conversation that will include sentences such as “Hello, how are you?” “What is your name?” “What is your favorite color?”.